

**TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION  
AND ELECTIONS COMMITTEE**

*February 22, 2013*

*Statement of Michael J. Brandi, Executive Director & General Counsel*

*House Bill No. 5897*

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Good morning, Chairperson Musto and Chairperson Jutila, Ranking Members Senator McLachlan and Representative Hwang, and distinguished Committee members. I am Michael Brandi, Executive Director & General Counsel of the State Elections Enforcement Commission. I am honored to speak before this Committee this morning and I look forward to working with the Committee on elections legislation. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony with respect to House Bill No. 5897.

The Commission strongly opposes House Bill No. 5897 as it is currently written and respectfully asks that the following comments be considered. This bill seeks to amend § 9-705 of the General Statutes which currently provides that grants under the Citizens' Election Program (CEP) be adjusted biennially based on any changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) published by the United States Department of Labor. This bill seeks wholesale elimination of these CPI adjustments.

The purpose of the CPI adjustments is to protect this voluntary Program from annihilation through inflation. The adjustments increase the CEP grant amounts to account for the increased costs of running campaigns and thereby ensure that the grant amounts are adequate to attract continued participation in the Program.

Without such increases, the cost of running an election will eventually become too expensive for candidates to logically choose public financing. The need for these cost of living adjustments is compounded by the fact that in 2010, the Legislature, in response to the Second Circuit's opinion in the Green Party litigation, removed potential matching grants that a participant would have been eligible to receive. This means that candidates could face increased campaign costs at the same time they are grappling with excessive spending by their opponents and possible outside entities with no source of additional grant funds.

In sum, although the CPI adjustments represent a minimal cost to the Citizens' Election Fund, they result in an increase in grant funds that, over time, is extremely significant to participating campaigns. This significance will only become more apparent as election costs continue to rise in the future.

Thank you for your consideration of the Elections Enforcement Commission's views on this bill.